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A REVIEW OF RECENT TYPOGRAPHY



A REVIEW OF RECENT TYPOGRAPHY IN ENGLAND · THE UNITED STATES FRANCE & GERMANY

by
STANLEY MORISON

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With sixteen illustrations

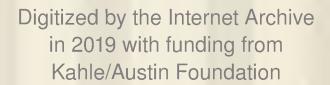
LONDON
THE FLEURON LIMITED
1927

Printed and made in Great Britain

PREFACE

The following articles on contemporary printing in England, the United States of America and on the Continent, have been re-written since their appearance in a volume entitled A Brief Survey of Printing (1922) which has been out of print for three years.

January 1927



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ENGLAND

Browne's Religio Medici

And Digby's Observations



At the Clarendon Press
MCMIX

ENGLAND

THE influence of the private presses upon English commercial work has been rather less than might have been expected, though the public interest in the craft undoubtedly owes much stimulation to this source. The general spirit of book design has followed a line of its own, which derives more from the example of William Pickering than from that of William Morris or of Cobden-Sanderson. Side by side with the work of the private presses there went on the unpretentious, yet nevertheless admirable, practice of good book printing in the offices of several old established English and Scottish houses such as Messrs T. and A. Constable of Edinburgh, and Messrs Ballantyne of Edinburgh and London. High standards of composition and press work were normally kept in these and other houses, though they suffered something of a shock upon the introduction of mechanical composition. The gradual substitution of machine for hand composition led in its early stages to a serious declension from the craft ideals of the older generation and produced not merely a revolution in method but, since it doubled or trebled the capacity of the office, it placed the printer under the necessity of multiplying commissions in order to fill his house. This led to the gradual surrender to the publisher of a certain hitherto tightly held independence in respect to the selection of type and the determination of typographical detail. Printing and publishing

PUBLISHING AND PRINTING

have been travelling farther and farther apart since the fifteenth century, and a sorry decline in the art of book production was the inevitable result. The publisher stands to the printer in the rôle of paymaster, and is preoccupied not with a craft ideal, but with a selling problem. Thus, if, as is too often the case, quick profits are pursued at the expense of literature and scholarship, a publisher is hardly likely to stop to respect the traditions of fine printing. One present-day publisher, the extent of whose output gives him prominence, debauches the public taste even more by the advertisement of his productions "in one large handsome volume" than by the books themselves. Were the public not informed that handsome printing lay in the use of bulky featherweight paper they would probably trust their own natural prejudice for a decent antique wove or laid. The worst of it is, that habitual disregard for the decencies of book production under the guise of "giving the public what it wants" bears an even bitterer fruit when an attempt is made to produce an exceptional volume in which, for the purpose of sale to another section of the public, it seems desirable to give some attention to the make-up. Every Christmas brings its stream of pretentious fatuities, the principle behind which is to spend a penny a copy on decoration and put another shilling on the price, and after all, with this ink, type and paper signifying nothing so much as ignorance, it is hard if the printer is told to accept it as "what the public wants." It is harder still, if, having consistently deprived the printer of the opportunity of showing

PRIDE IN PUBLISHING

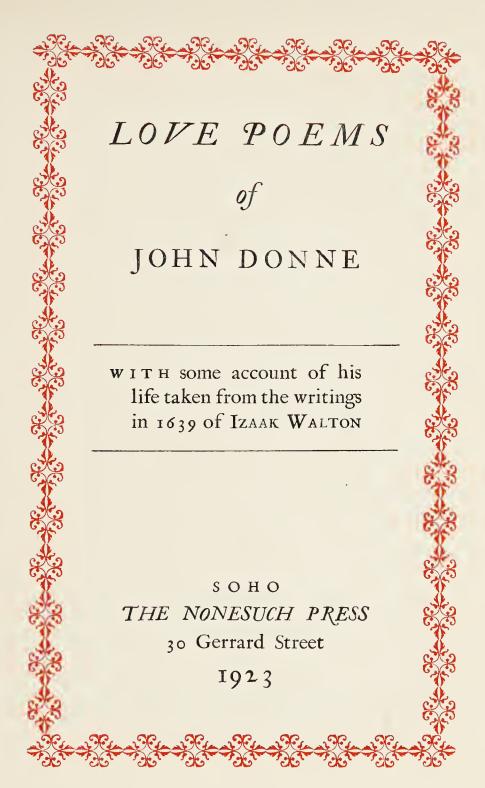
initiative, the publisher is going to take care to blame him for his lack of enterprise. It seems then that the general level of book production cannot be raised except by securing a greater degree of co-operation between printer and publisher, just as the level of publishing can only be maintained by supporting the liaison between the publisher and the reading and writing classes.

The important fact to note is that, from one cause or another, the initiative in book design has been surrendered by the printer to the publisher. Many, too, of the leading printing houses of England have long been in possession of families whose present-day representatives bear their responsibilities perhaps somewhat too lightly. Exceptional houses, such as the Arden Press when directed by Mr Newdigate (who now conducts with so much distinction the Shakespeare Head Press), the presses of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the Curwen Press, the Westminster Press and the Pelican Press have to their credit a number of handsome books. Generally, however, the responsibility for the design of a book is nowadays assumed by its publisher. He specifies the type to be used, its measure, and the page-margins, indeed so seriously does the present-day publisher now regard the physics of his books that he rarely allows the printer to design even a title-page. In the case of several eminent London houses, such as Messrs Chatto and Windus, Mr Martin Secker, Messrs William Heinemann, and Mr Jonathan Cape, this practice has more than justified itself. There can be no

PUBLIC INTEREST IN PRINTING

doubt that many of the volumes put out by these firms are distinctly better than would have been the case had they been designed by printers. It would seem that the production departments of the houses mentioned keep a stricter watch than do most printers upon the production of new types and ornaments. Interest in typography outside the trade is stimulated by the increasing space nowadays regularly accorded to it in the leading literary journals, of which we need only mention *The London Mercury*.

From the point of view of the collector the most significant of all recent publishing enterprises are the productions of a postwar undertaking, the Nonesuch Press directed by Mr Francis Meynell, founder and typographer of the well-known Pelican Press, which has had such a notable influence upon advertisement printing. In spite of their serious literary merits, it remains that the conspicuous success of Nonesuch publications is ingreatest measure due to the manner of their printing. Their designer correctly divined that the public of the present day were more likely to be interested in variety of type and format than in the general uniformity of design to which they had been accustomed by the Doves and Riccardi Presses. The Nonesuch Press is not a general publishing house in the same sense as the firms whose names we have already mentioned. It specialises in reprints and uses to the full the opportunity for decorative treatment which lies to the hand of the designer with a knowledge of historic style in typography. So far as Mr Meynell was following any precedent it would perhaps be



THE NONESUCH PRESS

that of the Riverside Editions printed by Mr Bruce Rogers for Messrs Houghton, Mifflin between the years 1900 and 1911. Though the typography of several of the early Nonesuch books is a little too emphatic to be irresistible, the volumes issued between The Love Poems of John Donne (1923) and the William Blake (1925) are universally admired inventions unless by those whose freedom it is to abandon all precedent. Even to these the Nonesuch has made its gesture in the printing of the text to Genesis with woodcuts by Mr Paul Nash. In this volume Mr Meynell took the risk of employing the very fine, bold capitals (Neuland) cut by Herr Rudolf Koch, one of Germany's ablest calligraphers. The Nonesuch books, though limited in their edition, are not costly, and here is to be noted a highly significant fact: the reason for the comparative inexpensiveness of even the largest of the Nonesuch books is that they are composed by machine and printed by machine. It is true that the classical standards of craftsmanship still lie with the Kelmscott and Doves Presses, and that the fine points of press-work, folding and binding, being less obvious, are but slightly regarded by the public. Equally, there can be no doubt that by making conscientious, and not merely commercial, use of modern methods Mr Meynell has gone far towards proving to many of us that the future of fine printing lies in the hands of those who are prepared to follow his lead and to use modern machinery. The Nonesuch Bible at 30 shillings a volume is a miracle of cheapness. In design the text is most satisfactory, a particularly pure form of letter is

MR FRANCIS MEYNELL

used, for which Mr Meynell re-designed a number of letters which are undesirable in the fount as used in the trade. Until the advent of the Nonesuch Press, mechanical composition was almost entirely identified with shoddy commercialism. Its use by one of the ablest of modern typographers has, as we have said, resulted in the production of very fine works at a low price, and in the extension of interest in typography to a much wider public than could afford the works of Victorian private presses.

This example of finely produced work at a greatly diminished cost has not been lost upon Mr Meynell's fellow publishers, and several have been quick to learn from him. The machine makers, too, have felt encouraged to surpass the type-founders, whose type designs they had been in the habit of corrupting, and to equip their machines with fine designs not available elsewhere. Thus Baskerville, Fournier, Blado, Granjon and other letters have been made available to the typographer, and books in these types add greatly to the variety of current English typography.

As may be verified in the Exhibition which the Bibliographical Society holds annually in London, the complexity of modern civilisation inevitably affects our tastes in book making and book collecting. The infinite variety of texts printed and reprinted necessarily makes our typography more disparate and eclectic than it ever was in the past. Not one type, but several types are needed to express our age and to fulfil its purpose. The varieties of paper necessary for the expression

PRIVATE PRESSES

of various kinds of illustration and type equally assist an interest in the minutiae of book design, and readers are not slow to delight in the continual slight novelty lying to the hand of the publisher who can command the services of several printing houses. Yet it is not certain that the cultivated taste of the future will approve the works of those publishers who rest satisfied with the best that the trade printer with his necessary limitations can produce. It may be that the verdict of the future will go to some smaller press, perhaps a private undertaking, where a greater liberty of experiment is possible, and where greater care may be given to technical considerations than is possible even in the best trade presses.

It must be admitted, however, that the upholders of the private press tradition are perhaps not altogether justifying themselves when it is remembered that in the words of a German writer, England is "der klassische Land der Privatdruckerein oder Privatpressen." We may perhaps be permitted to regret that our most distinguished printer in this field, Mr Hornby, has used none but his fine neo-Subiaco type for more than twenty years. Magnificent, and in many cases unrivalled in splendour, as are many of the Ashendene books, the press would have gained in interest and influence had Mr Hornby varied his formula and used another letter from time to time. Not the least admirable quality in the Ashendene books is their degree of technical excellence. This is a point in which one or two of the otherwise fine books of the Golden Cockerel Press are lacking. The Gregynog Press, a

LOLLY WILLOWES

OR THE LOVING
HUNTSMAN

.....

 $\mathcal{B}y$

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

LONDON
CHATTO & WINDUS
1926

BOOK ILLUSTRATION

private press of recent foundation, after having produced books in a type of inferior American design is now turning to better faces. Its recent productions, the Poems of George Herbert, and Poems of Henry Vaughan, besides being interesting in themselves give promise of better things in the future. But, in spite of the efforts now being made, there is abundant opportunity for more work of a serious experimental character. A private press which chose to make use of modern mechanical methods might probably accomplish a very great deal. It is doubtful whether the potentiality for fine work of the single type composing machine has been fully developed. The desirability of equipping a private press with its own type foundry is obvious, and, were the composing machine freed from the hampering conditions essential to the trade press, finer results could probably be obtained. In this connection, it is interesting to note that one or two distinguished presses in Germany are working with types cast by an English machine of this kind. The extension of this principle would be of undoubted benefit in view of the facilities which the possession of a machine of this character would confer-for instance, a constant supply of new types of different design.

It would add to the interest of English book production if typographers and publishers would consider a little less nervously than in the past the subject of coloured illustration. That is to say, illustration in which colour is rather an integral part of the design than a merely gratuitous superfluity, as in the case of the Golden Cockerel *Swift*. It is not a little

PASSIO DOMINI NOSTRI JESU CHRISTI

BEING THE 26TH AND 27TH CHAPTERS OF SAINT MATTHEW'S GOSPEL FROM THE LATIN TEXT



WALTHAM SAINT LAWRENCE IN ENGLAND AT THE GOLDEN COCKEREL PRESS MCMXXVI

MR ALBERT RUTHERSTON

curious that the example of Mr Pissarro's charming volumes has not helped us, as it might, towards an appreciation of books decorated with coloured wood-engravings. The collector will not find it easy to point to many English books of the past twenty years whose illustration and typography are agreeable to each other, and where the degree of artistic or technical excellence of both approximate to the best Paris work. Our best successes are, perhaps, the books of Claud Lovat Fraser and Albert Rutherston, illustrated in colour from zinc blocks. In Mr Lovat Fraser's case the acceptance of zinc with its coarsening quality does not so much matter, since his inspiration was drawn from the popular English Chapbook of the early nineteenth century. Mr Rutherston's delicate designs would surely gain in effect if engraved upon copper or wood.

UNITED STATES



UNITED STATES

Tine book printing in the United States owes its existence to English influences, and, above all, to that of William Morris. Apart from a number of 'fine' editions by a few typographers American book production has yet to create a school of its own. The native American style is to be found rather in commercial printing than in book-work. Almost every new English magazine is obviously based upon the lay-out of an American counterpart, but even so the work of our own printers is poor when compared with that of American periodical houses. The economic importance of press advertising is chiefly responsible for American superiority in this field since the huge sums spent in the purchase of space leave an agreeable margin for experimentation in what is there called 'art work,' i.e. details of typography and ornament. In England, where much smaller figures are involved, the margin available for typographical experiment is restricted to a minimum. This is true also in respect to commercial job printing, though, perhaps, comparison here is not quite so obviously to the disadvantage of English work. Nevertheless, in the printing of catalogues and commercial leaflets, many English printers are laboriously copying American models, and English printers import large quantities of American types, inevitably falling into the habit of copying the style of the specimens supplied by the

typefounders. Accordingly, a more or less close approximation of treatment tends to characterise the ephemeral printing of England and America. Not quite the same phenomenon is observable in the kind of printing with which we are in this volume exclusively concerned, i.e. the printing of books.

In this department of printing it is as important to conserve the notes of convention and tradition as it is to depart from them in most kinds of advertising or commercial work. Even in progressive America, with certain exceptions, books are to-day very little better than, or even different from, what they were twenty years ago. The average American work in fiction, biography, science, or what not, has hardly benefited by the new inspiration which has so considerably affected commercial printing. In the past, the American book has sustained considerable European influence, and that not only from England. Mr Walter Gilliss, for example, was enamoured of the neo-Elzevir French style, to which we shall later allude. The volumes printed under his direction, in imported French types, strike a peculiarly interesting, albeit not very vigorous, note, but though Mr Gilliss was faithful to this style for the many years of his typographical life, it has not had a lasting influence upon the typography of his nation and it remains the fact that American dependence upon English authors and English publishers has resulted in the production of books which tend to be of slight interest, because they too much resemble the English styles of to-day or yesterday.

► AMYCUS ET CÉLESTIN ◄



Prosterné au seuil de sa grotte sauvage, l'ermite Célestin passa en prières la vigile de Pâques, cette nuit angélique pendant laquelle les demons fremissants sont précipités dans l'abîme. Et tandis que les ombres couvraient la terre, à l'heure où l'Ange exterminateur avait plané sur l'Egypte, Célestin frissonna, saisi d'angoisse et d'inquiétude. Il entendait au

Since it would appear that the economics of American book production permit with difficulty the expenditure of time necessary for the production of books even of the slightest typographic interest, more and more standardisation is likely to characterise the work of the publishers who do care how their books are produced. Already, several large American houses have their own plant, and it inevitably follows that the larger the establishment the greater the difficulty in varying the details of production even by those who are seriously interested in the problem.

In book printing too, the quest for variety is likely to be beset with dangers unless backed by resources of self-discipline and scholarship. Often the result of typographical experiment and attempted originality issue in futility. That the quality of discrimination is sufficiently rare, and when found insufficiently appreciated, is, no doubt, the explanation of the fact that, excepting perhaps certain of the University Presses, there do not appear to be many general printing houses in the United States which possesses either the intelligence, or the material, required for the competent handling of first class works in literature, science, and art. To print perfectly under one roof a modern novel, a volume of poetry, a bibliography of incunabula, or a liturgical book, to say nothing of much fine ephemeral work besides, is an accomplishment so rare as to be impossible in England, and only Mr D. B. Updike has made it possible in America. The Merrymount Press at Boston is the result of hard work for more than thirty years by a man who is a scholar as well as a printer.

Charles Lamb

A LETTER regarding Roast Pig to WILLIAM HAZLITT and

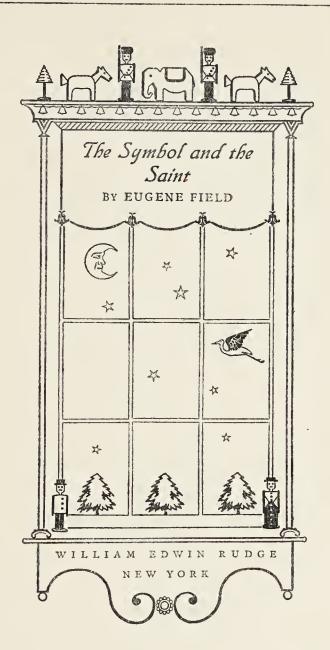
A LETTER on Friendship to ROBERT LLOYD
together with
A DISSERTATION on ROAST PIG



Privately Printed for his Friends by W. K. Bixby 1922

MR BRUCE ROGERS

This is not to say, however, that Mr Updike is the chief influence in American book design. There are indeed many who wish it were so, and amongst them Mr Bruce Rogers, whose ingenious work in so many styles has attracted the admiration of a more numerous school. This is no surprise to those who know his books. Their variety is infinite, and in every one Mr Rogers displays complete mastery over his material, whether of old style or modern types, of decoration, of format, and of every detail of binding and press work. Over all this diversity there is a welcome note of grace, airiness and wit, absent from the books of most other workers. Mr Rogers' example indeed has initiated a wholesale and wholesome abandonment of the heavy black types and borders beloved of William Morris, and more beloved of his immediate disciples. Though, perhaps, much of Mr Rogers' work is archaic in mood, in that his affections are with the sixteenth rather than with the fifteenth century, he has made for progress. Thus his example has very much mitigated the superstitious admiration for Jenson, which prevailed as a result of the acceptance of his letter as a basis for the Kelmscott, Doves, Montallegro, and other types. It is true that Mr Rogers has himself designed types based upon Jenson's (the Montaigne and the Centaur), and he has always employed them in a modern fashion, but the upper-case of both these letters derive from, rather than reproduce, the original. It may be unfortunate that throughout his career Mr Rogers has preferred to be associated with various printing houses from time



The Maure Decade

AMERICAN LIFE

AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by

THOMAS BEER

"... Mr. Whistler said: 'Mauve? Mauve is just pink trying to be purple ...'"



Alfred · A · Knopf · New York

to time, rather than to direct an establishment of his own, yet, perhaps in that case we should never have been given the volumes whose variety has taught us the beauties of many a transitional and modern type despised and rejected by our fathers. One of the considerations which make Mr Rogers so important to our generation is that he has worked not merely with the classical types of Jenson, Caslon, Garamond, and others of greater beauty fashioned by himself, but he has employed French bâtarde and civilité, Didot, Bodoni, and eighteenth century types like Brimmer and Oxford, and the various faces supplied with the Linotype and Monotype machines. The proprietors of the latter are responsible for the cutting of one or two highly interesting letters made by Mr Goudy, and of which Mr Rogers has designed specimens. Strictly speaking, these are not books, but the beauty of the Garamond specimen (1921) and the Italian old style (1925) makes it impossible to pass them over without record. Both the types exhibited to such splendid advantage were drawn by Mr Frederic W. Goudy, a letter designer who exerts a great influence upon American printers. Though he has produced a number of books printed on a hand press, it is as a type designer that Mr Goudy has won his reputation. These types1 are a familiar feature in American newspaper and general printing, but are more rarely to be met with in book printing, where, as we have noted, the force of convention and conservatism is more considerable.

¹ Cf. Morison, Stanley: Type Designs of the Past and Present, London, 1926, p. 59.

AMERICAN ADVERTISING

The preference of book printers for varieties of English old style types continues, and even Garamond's type made to the version of Mr Goudy's design by the American Monotype Company, would appear to be less acceptable for books than for advertising. In spite of superficial resemblances, the work of printing for literature and that of printing for advertising possess little in common. That both kinds of printing are made to be read is true, but the considerations which govern the composition of a work of 250 pages addressed to the general reader, cannot be compared with those which apply to the advertising brochure. Sales copy is designed to be read by the unwilling, and therefore he needs to be dragged into perusal by every sort of typographical seduction. It is obvious that the novelty of presentation which forms an essential element of the advertising campaign must inevitably fidget and frighten the kind reader of a novel or biography. It is plain, then, that types for use in commercial printing must be 'different,' whereas for the literary reader a type form needs rather to be restrained and self-effacing. It must not be 'different' but should be designed within the bounds of the type of the average newspaper on the one hand, and the average novel on the other. It is, up to a point, satisfactory that there exists no publisher in England or the United States who would risk the composition of one of his books in the Cheltenham letter which for years dominated English and American job printing. The very 'differences' which this letter possesses, and which recommend it to publicity men and sales experts, exclude it from use in books. To Mr Goudy, then, it must be something of a disappointment to find that though he has banished Cheltenham or other worse types from the pages of *The Ladies' Home Journal* and *The Saturday Evening Post* and substituted therefor the Goudy Old Style, the Goudy Modern, Goudy Garamont and the Goudy Bold, scarcely one of his types has found regular use in books.

Mr Knopf, one of New York's ablest publishers, is responsible for the making of a number of fine books. He followed his edition of Lord Morley's Burke (1914), printed by Mr Rogers in Caslon type, with Mr Hergesheimer's Presbyterian Child (1923) in Scotch, and Ralph Herne (1923) in Caslon both examples of Mr Rogers' latest work, and both interesting. The Carl Sternheim Fairfax is one of the few volumes I have seen composed in Mr Goudy's Garamont, and it makes by no means a satisfactory volume. It is due possibly to a prepossession with antique and mock-antique printing on the part of American book collectors that Mr Goudy's really excellent 'modern' type (Goudy Modern) has not so far found a publisher. Now that it is available on the monotype it is to be hoped that publishers will not ignore the claims of this letter for use in books where it is desired to suggest an atmosphere of modernity.

It must be admitted that in comparison with the finest continental (we will not say English) work most contemporary American printing presents a certain pedestrian quality; but it nevertheless leads to a very valuable concentration upon the

THE AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION

details of setting and spacing. In the case of Mr Bruce Rogers, an eminent thoroughness of technique goes to his every book and it is here, rather than from the cunning combinations of typographical ornaments or allusive inventions and decorations which he has made, that England and Germany can learn from America. After all, the vital elements of fine typography do not lie primarily in decoration, but in composition, i.e. the making of letters into words with no more than exactly the right space between them, between the words, and between the lines. In this right and proportionate distribution of spaces as between the letters, the words, and lines, lies the secret of fine setting. Does a word composed of letters which are condensed in design demand more, or less, space between the letters than if they were rounder and freer in form? Does a composition in type which has a certain heaviness of colour require more, or less, space between its lines than if set in type of a lighter cut? The answers which Mr Rogers has made to many questions of this kind may be deduced from his books, and for this reason alone no serious typographer can afford to ignore them.

FRANCE



FRANCE

The cult of finely printed and illustrated books pursued during the eighteenth century with an almost extravagant enthusiasm was, of course, very severely affected by the Revolution. It was not altogether killed, but the tradition was broken, and though the greatest of all eighteenth century masters, J. M. Moreau-le-jeune, survived the change of régime, he was given no opportunity to exercise his craft and even died in want. The decorated, illustrated, hyper-expensive book in his style was not wanted.

The contemporary demand for fine printing, where it existed, was for a new style. The events of the day inevitably fostered a spirit of novelty, though even before the Revolution the native style had been modified by foreign infiltration. Thus, the widely spaced and leaded page of Baskerville, carried further by Bodoni of Parma, was developed in France by the Didots. This was not quite so much a novelty in France as it appears, because Baskerville himself was indebted to Philippe Grandjean for much of his inspiration. Nevertheless, but for Baskerville it is doubtful whether the French book would have developed as it did under the influence of the Didot family. This great dynasty of engravers, typefounders, paper makers, printers and publishers, succeeded in moulding the letter and spirit of French printing for more than 120 years.

TYPOGRAPHY OF THE REVOLUTION

We have seen that Grandjean and Luce brought out a number of types which were distinctly novel in design. The line of development in type design thus initiated was continued by the first of the Didots, Ambroise Firmin Didot, the director of the Imprimerie Royale, who cut in 1775 the first of those condensed, refined and mechanically perfect letters which were destined to become typical of French printing for almost five generations. In the hands of a careful craftsman, these letters produced a striking effect, but it was exceedingly rare for the generality of French printing to secure the logical arrangement of matter, careful printing and press work, and fine paper upon which the hair lines of the condensed Didot types so seriously depend for a passably fair appearance.

The beginnings of this open and spacious style of typography, which Bodoni did so much to popularise, were linked with that of the early generation by the use of the same style of ornament. At the Revolution, however, this kind of ornament vanished from French books, as it had already vanished from those of Bodoni, and for a time there was no ornament other than the rules and dashes of the compositor. The National Printing House lost the rôle of leadership which it had enjoyed since its foundation by Louis XIII at the instance of Cardinal Richelieu in 1640. The vicissitudes of the institution during the Revolution, in which it fell by turn under the control of this or that faction, brought to an end a fine tradition of craftsmanship. Henceforth, the development of type design and typographic style is to be found outside the

AND THE EMPIRE

official printing house, and though in 1800 we still find the Didots governing French typography, it is as private citizens, and not as crown or government servants.

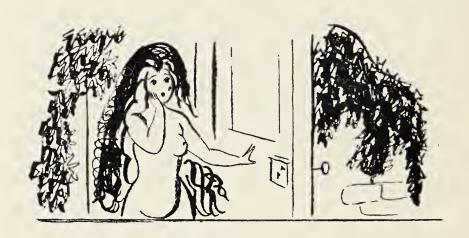
The natural appetite for decoration, so characteristic of France, did not remain long without typographical expression, and by the first Empire, and under the patronage of Napoleon, pseudo-classic decoration became the vogue in architecture, and, of course, in such household objects as furniture and books. The Didots, however, never espoused the new style, and though the important Paris typefounder, Gillé fils, put out a vast number of extremely well finished cartouches, vignettes, fleurons, head bands, and the rest, his enterprise received little encouragement, the fact being that the style of the first Empire had hardly a genuine hold upon society. Almost immediately there were signs of an outbreak of rebellion against the classic. The invention, too, of lithography had a very serious influence upon French typography; this may be seen in any number of title-pages of books published under the Empire, corrupt lettering, surrounded by masses of pen flourishes deface volumes otherwise presentable.

In a few years, typefounders were busy copying the fantastic ornaments and alphabets of the lithographers, and we enter two decades of almost unrelieved ugliness in type design and book production; a period of typographical cacophony, perhaps the worst in Europe. The typography of Louis Philippe and the *époque romantique* gave us nothing but objects of historical interest.

LÉO LARGUIER

LA POUPÉE

DESSINS DE CHAS LABORDE



COLLECTION DE
"LA ROSE ET LE LAURIER"
G. BRIFFAUT, ÉDITEUR

4, RUE DE FURSTENBERG, PARIS (VI°)

M CM XXV

The revival of old face type occurred about this time in England, and it may, or may not, have been noticed in France. It was from Lyons, and not from Paris, that there came the inspiration towards better work. In 1846, Louis Perrin, after much use of the available materials of his time, cut a new letter for himself. The design for the capitals was based upon the classical forms engraved on any number of roman inscriptions to be found in his native Lyons—the caractères Augustaux he called them. For the lower-case, he went rather to the sixteenth century, and drew upon the models used by Jean de Tournes. These letters form a very agreeable series, and must have been very refreshing to eyes wearied by the corruptions of the original Didot.

The interest in the new style for a long time had only a purely literary success, but it led the way towards simplicity, and away from the typographical effervescences of 1810 to 1840. The revived Lyons types were soon copied in Paris and elsewhere, and were issued with a series of decorations composed of conventional renaissance flowers, cartouches, and arabesques. In the typefounders' argot, Perrin's letters were known as Elzévir, which has since become their term for anything that is not Didot in spirit. By Perrin himself, and his imitators, a number of very presentable books were made. After some experiments in Paris, a quite high degree of excellence was reached in the volumes of Jouaust and Lemerre. Their manner was copied in London by the publisher, Mr Fisher Unwin, in the nineties, for his editions of John Oliver Hobbes and others.

EDOUARD PELLETAN

In 1870 the Paris printer, Jules Claye, re-cut a large number of decorated initials, vignettes, and flowers created in the arabesque manner by Peter Floetner of Nuremberg in 1546, and which were much used by the Lyonese printers of that century. The volumes in which serious typographic ambition played any part were thus dressed in this Elzevir or neo-Lyons style. These were hardly varied until the edition in 1896 of Monsieur Édouard Pelletan, who in that year established the first publishing house to employ for secular purposes the old official types attributed to Garamond and Grandjean.

Pelletan was a Positivist, and his typography is not altogether without a tendency towards the doctrinaire. In order that he might be better understood, Pelletan published in 1895 Le Livre—a manifesto. The issuing of manifestos was often resorted to by Pelletan in his early years. There was a Lettre aux Bibliophiles, and, later on, a Deuxième Lettre aux Bibliophiles. The essence of his preaching and his practice was to show what typography should signify. The typographer should indicate, by his choice of type form, the genius of the text for which it was used. This formula has the defect of all formulas. Because the Ballades of Villon is an archaic piece, Pelletan resorted to black letter headings and red versals. He thought that used thus, type illustrated Villon. Certain German and American printers appear to be tempted to share Pelletan's view. Most readers would probably decline to follow Pelletan in his extension of the principle. He printed La Rôtisserie de la Reine Pédauque of Anatole France in 'Garamond' italic

LETTRES

DE

JEAN DE LA FONTAINE

À SA FEMME

SUR UN VOYAGE DE PARIS EN LIMOUSIN

A MESDAMES DE BOUILLON
DE CHAMPMESLÉ, ULRICH, ETC.
A MESSIEURS JEANNART, DE MAUCROIX
FOUCQUET, RACINE
AU PRINCE DE CONTY, ETC.

Édition complète, illustrée par J.-L. Perrichon de paysages & portraits, gravés sur bois



PARIS

DE LA COLLECTION ADOLPHE BORDES
HELLEU ET SERGENT ÉDITEURS

125, Boulevard Saint-Germain, 125

MCMXX

PELLETAN AND THE

because it represented, in his view, something like the cursive writing in which that Ms. might have been written by the celebrated Abbé Jérôme Coignard. Pelletan employed several types, but though addicted to 'period' printing was not a slave to it. From 1901 he published a number of very successful illustrated works, using such artists as Steinlen and Grasset. It was after 1907 that he seems to have entered into his stride, producing Le Misanthrope of Molière, illustrated by Jeanniot (1907), and a Hésiod (1912). His title-pages and general typography had by this time a pleasant, restful mellowness which comforted the reader with its sense of balance, and freedom from any selfconscious typographical dexterity. The series of Almanachs, which he brought out from 1898 onwards, were charmingly printed at the Imprimerie Nationale, with wood-cuts by Grasset printed in soft colours, rather in the delightful manner used in Lucien Pissarro's Eragny books, which appear in the Almanach for 1901. Eugène Grasset had taken considerable interest in typography, and designed in 1897 a letter for the typefoundry directed by the well known scholar and bibliophile, Georges Peignot, to whom we are indebted for the issue of a number of type faces which have contributed so much interest to recent French printing. The twentieth century indeed witnessed a typographical awakening.

M. Peignot's example was not without its effect, and, at the same time, there succeeded to the direction of the Imprimerie Nationale an erudite and practical enthusiast, M. Arthur Christian. In his period of office, there was printed the im-

IMPRIMERIE NATIONALE

mense work of Claudin, Histoire de l'Imprimerie en France (1900), composed in large sizes of 'Garamond' and Grandjean types. M. Christian, himself, is the author of a number of works on typography. The interest of his Débuts de l'Imprimerie (1905) is augmented by the author's plan of printing each chapter in one of the proprietary types of the Imprimerie Nationale¹.

In the meantime, private clubs, supported by powerful personages in society and politics, were interesting themselves in the printed book. After the French Exhibition of 1900, the successful emergence of what was then called l'art libre from its struggle with the traditionalists expressed itself in book illustration and finally in the Daphnis & Chloé printed at the Imprimerie Nationale in Grandjean's type, with the delicate lithographs of Pierre Bonnard. Following Pelletan, French artists preferred the limitations of the wood-cut to the freedom of lithography—the contrary is the case in Germany, where the Daphnis & Chloé had, and still has, considerable influence. Publishers in Munich and Dresden are even to-day issuing books obviously made after the example of Bonnard's beautiful book. In 1902 the club, 'Le Livre Contemporain,' founded by Arthur Christian and Louis Barthou, produced several interesting works, the most important being Albert Besnard's edition of L'Affaire Clémenceau by Dumas (1905).

¹ M. Paul Beaujon has lately proved that the Caractères de l'Université in the possession of the Imprimerie Nationale are not, as claimed by M. Christian, the work or the design of Garamond but come from the hand of Jean Jannon, c. 1620. (Cf. Beaujon, 'The Garamond Types' in The Fleuron, No. 5, Cambridge 1926, p. 131.)

ANDRÉ SALMON



le Calumet

édition définitive augmentée de poèmes nouveaux et ornée de gravures sur bois par ANDRÉ DERAIN

> éditions de la Nouvelle Revue Française PARIS MCMXX

ANDRÉ MAUROIS

ARIEL

οŲ

LA VIE DE SHELLEY

VIGNETTES
DE
HERMINE DAVID

ÉDITIONS ÉMILE-PAUL FRÈRES 14, rue de l'abbaye PARIS

MAURICE DENIS

The private press, as known to English and German amateurs, has secured no lodgment in the ambitions of French enthusiasts. Instead, there is a tendency to organise little groups for the furtherance of a common ambition. In addition, therefore, to Le Livre Contemporain, there are numerous groups of bibliophiles occupying themselves with typography and book illustration. Much the most ambitious book produced in this way is the Petites Fleurs de S. François, illustrated by the scholar and artist, Maurice Denis, who has done so much for the renaissance of religious art. This artist's freshness of imagination, evident, for example, in his frescoes in the Church of S. Paul, Geneva, is again conspicuous in his edition of the Fioretti. All his designs for this book were engraved on wood, and printed in colour by Jacques Bertrand. The book was produced at the Imprimerie Nationale, with text composed in 'Garamond' type.

M. Leon Pichon is a distinguished publisher of the finely printed book, finely illustrated. M. Pichon learnt his trade in the printing house of his father, and, tempted by the example of Pelletan, determined to publish on his own account. He shared with Pelletan an enthusiasm for the wood-cut, and the éditions Pichon are uniformly illustrated by compositions in this medium, principally from the hands of Hermann Paul and E. Carlègle. This renaissance of wood-engraving led to excesses, and there arose irresponsibles for whom anything was good enough if only it were a wood-cut. It is not remarkable that there should be signs of a reversion to intaglio

printed illustrations. Thus in the year 1920, J. E. Laboureur, a wood-engraver, who had already given us such a charming book in the *Chansons Madécasses*, produced a text of Monsieur Valéry Larbaud's *Beauté*, mon beau souci, with some 37 designs printed from copper plates engraved with a burin in the manner of the eighteenth century. The experiment was exceedingly successful, and the artist has followed it with a magnificent text by Rémy de Gourmont, *Le Songe d'une Femme* (Bloch 1925). Another artist who has forsaken the wood-cut is M. Charles Laborde, whose *Tendres Stocks* (Émile Paul, 1924) has engraved illustrations which do not however gain by being coloured.

The dainty Almanachs issued by M. Maynial from the designs of Bonfils and Martin, are printed intaglio from engraved plates. In spite, therefore, of the fine achievements of F. Siméon, Constant Le Breton, Daragnès, and the work of Bernard Naudin for Pelletan's successor, René Helleu, it would appear that the wood-cut will now meet with very serious competition, but, at the moment, the bois is still supreme. Many of the designs are heavy, and printed with coarse types in the manner of the English early nineteenth century Chapbooks of Catnach and others. M. André Lhôte's illustrations to his Rime of the Ancyent Marinere (1920) are so much lighter in line as to print very agreeably with the text set in 14 point Caslon. It makes a much more charming volume than the same illustrator's edition of Paul Claudel's translation of Francis Thompson's Anthem of Earth. The edition of Le Prince de

Machiavel made by Jou and Bosviel is interesting, not only on account of the illustrations by Louis Jou, but the type which has been cut for the edition has not been employed since. Unlike the letters designed by Auriol, Grasset, Giraldon, and other French artists, in which novelty is perhaps their only quality, Jou's letter is traditional, and therefore more literary in appearance.

More recently, there has been a tendency towards the production of handsomely printed books in which there is no illustration and little decoration, books, therefore, whose appeal is purely typographical. M. Piazza has issued a series of volumes of this kind. It is enough to mention his quarto Manon Lescaut (1923) finely composed at the Imprimerie Nationale in 'Garamond' type. The press work is in each case admirable, and, though the edition is limited, the volumes are extremely cheap. We could wish that M. Piazza would vary the type display. It is unfortunate when a publisher, finding a book is successful, fears to depart from its architecture, and turns all his successes into formulas. It would be interesting if a publishing house like, perhaps, La Sirène, would give an undertaking to the public not to repeat a typographical design, no matter how successful, but to promise its readers a new format for every book. It is pleasant to record that the marked improvement in books for bibliophiles extends also to trade editions. Many of the publications of the leading French publishers, such as Hachette, Larousse, and Plon, are handsomely composed and well printed.

GERMANY



GERMANY

THE beginnings of the revived German interest in the \perp printing craft are perhaps to be found in the first number of the Blätter für die Kunst arranged by the poet, Stefan George, in October 1892. This journal, printed by Otto von Holten, in the Römischer antiqua of Genzsch and Heyse, slight as it was, created interest in the problems of typography. But more immediately related to the new movement was a more ambitious venture, a second periodical, the Pan, a splendid superroyal quarto devoted to the arts and letters, the first number of which appeared in 1895. This review was issued by the 'Genossenschaft Pan,' a group of young artists and writers led by Julius Meier-Graefe (of whom more will be said infra). Baron Bodenhausen and Count Harry Kessler, who ten years later established a private press at Weimar, and who issued in 1906 a finely printed text, Paul Gauguin by Jean de Rotonchamp. Pan was handsomely printed by the Leipzig firm of Drugulin, in an old letter whose archaic beauty recalls that of the Fell types in use at the Oxford University Press. This type was relied on almost exclusively for the first ten years of the German revival, while Count Kessler was later associated with the introduction into Germany of the Caslon old-face. The venture was richly illustrated with original lithographs, by Joseph Pennell and William Rothenstein among others. Etchings by Strang and others also appeared, and the editors were close observers of the contemporary English arts and crafts movement. The 1896 volume included a number of Kelmscott facsimiles, and brought Germany into touch with William Morris and Walter Crane.

Educated Germans grew to share these interests with great enthusiasm, and general publishers and printers were persuaded to assist the new movement. In 1896 the firm of Eugen Diederichs commenced the publication of limited editions for the bibliophile. He was quickly joined by Fischer, Schuster and Loffler, Alb. Langen, and later a new publishing house, the Insel-Verlag (1902), which owed its origin to another periodical, the Insel (established in 1899), founded by a small group of writers, Bierbaum, Heymel, and R. A. Schroeder. The Insel-Verlag, first under the direction of Rudolph von Poellnitz and the distinguished Leipzig printer, Carl Ernst Poeschel, and subsequently of Dr Anton Kippenberg, issued a number of very handsome volumes. The most individual of these, the series of German classics entitled the Grossherzog Wilhelm Ernst Ausgabe, commenced to appear in 1905. The format of the series was designed by Mr Emery Walker, and the volumes possessed a calligraphic half-title and title designed by Mr Edward Johnston and Mr Eric Gill, sponsored by Count Kessler. An exhibition of the work of these latter masters was held at Weimar, and elsewhere, in 1905 and the ensuing ten years saw a great increase of enthusiasm and of discernment.

The German trade book has progressed through several

VOR DEM PALASTE DES MENELAS ZU SPARTA

Helena tritt auf und Chor gefangener Trojanerinnen. Panthalis, Chorführerin.

HELENA

EWUNDERT viel und viel gescholten Helena Vom Strande komm'ich wo wir erst gelandet sind, Noch immer trunken von des Gewoges regsamem Geschaukel, das vom phrygischen Blachgefild uns her Auf sträubig-hohem Rücken, durch Poseidons Gunst Und Euros' Kraft, in vaterländische Buchten trug. Dort unten freuet nun der König Menelas Der Rückkehr samt den tapfersten seiner Krieger sich. Du aber heisse mich willkommen, hohes Haus, Das Tyndareos, mein Vater, nah dem Hange sich Von Pallas' Hügel wiederkehrend aufgebaut Und, als ich hier mit Klytämnestren schwesterlich, Mit Kastor auch und Pollux fröhlich spielend wuchs, Vor allen Häusern Spartas herrlich ausgeschmückt. Gegrüsset seid mir, der ehrnen Pforte Flügel ihr! Durch euer gastlich ladendes Weiteröffnen einst Geschah's dass mir, erwählt aus vielen, Menelas In Bräutigamsgestalt entgegen leuchtete. Eröffnet mir sie wieder, dass ich ein Eilgebot Des Königs treu erfülle, wie der Gattin ziemt. Lasst mich hinein! und alles bleibe hinter mir,



PRIVATE PRESSES

imitative stages. The Germans were much interested in the graceful editions made by Mr J. M. Dent then at work in Great Eastern Street, London, laying the foundations of his now world-famous house. In 1893 Mr Dent published the Morte d'Arthur with the illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley which made an enormous sensation in Germany. Mr Dent's Temple Classics were copied by the S. Fischer Verlag. Several early Insel books were modelled upon contemporary Dent productions, and Mr John Lane's books also earned German imitators. Mr Will Bradley himself, in his early years not free from indebtedness to Beardsley, also interested the Pan group. Out of these and other influences developed what may now claim to be the most vigorous school of book artists in the world. The reputation of a number has already been carried abroad, but it cannot be said that the work of German typographers has received anything like the consideration it deserves from English and American collectors. In the judgement of at least one chronicler, German work in the field of book production in all its departments of typography and presswork, or in binding and endpapers, etc. possesses a greater vitality than that of any other country. So energetic has been the attack upon the problems involved, that the present position of the German school is the result of no more than thirty years' experiment.

The influence of the Doves Press now grew strongly upon the Germans, and was wholesome in its effect, restraining somewhat their tendency towards excited colours and tortured

THE CALLIGRAPHIC MOVEMENT

initial letters. Thus, taste for the extravagant and bizarre gave place to a patient and perhaps too careful following of the Doves style. Such at least was the style of the first German private presses, the Ernst Ludwig Presse (Kleukens, Darmstadt, 1907) and the Janus Presse (C. E. Poeschel and Walter Tiemann, Leipzig, 1907), though none of these was able to rival the beauty of the Doves type form. In 1906 Herr Poeschel founded with the Munich publisher, Hans von Weber, Die Zwiebelfisch, a crown octavo periodical which, while it owed perhaps a little to the example of Will Bradley's Chapbook (Springfield, Mass. 1896), displays a number of original and excellent features, in particular a mastery of the use of small type.

In the meantime, the influence of the English school of calligraphy was powerfully affecting the German artistic crafts. The fine writing of Mr Johnston had won a more intense admiration in Germany than in England (and in the United States his genius is to this day almost entirely overlooked), and in 1906 his pupil Fräulein Anna Simons was commissioned by the government to give courses of writing at Düsseldorf and other centres. In a short time, a number of able German practitioners were able to bring a newly-found skill to the solution of typographical problems. Again, therefore, an English influence operated to the discipline, and thereby to the enrichment, of the German graphic arts. The Johnston influence was in fact doubly important. Not only did its traditional basis enable German artists to design title-

RUDOLPH KOCH

pages and decorations in true harmony with the printed book, but it also exerted an even more potent force in the field of type design.

Unlike their English colleagues, the German typefounders were not slow to discern the development on the one hand of a public interest in roman letter, and, on the other, of the evolution of a school of masters of that form. In this connection, the achievements of Dr Karl Klingspor, typefounder of Offenbach a. M. deserve mention. Most of the credit for the notable improvement in German type design is due to his enterprise and sagacity. Klingspor's first attempt, the Eckmann-schrift (1901), was not happy, nor indeed is there much to be said for the first type designed by the architect Peter Behrens and cut in 1902. The roman letter was still a novelty to the Germans, and the absence of tradition led to a certain wildness of experiment which died hard. To the Anglo-Saxon, the Tiemann antiqua of 1909 was the first real success, and it has found a certain favour in England. Its companion, the Tiemann kursiv is an even more handsome letter, flowing as an italic should be, and of a refreshingly novel cut without being exotic. Klingspor's recent antiquas also include a highly successful character designed by Peter Behrens in 1914. The latest creation is a roman cut by Rudolph Koch. This able calligrapher, wood engraver, etcher and weaver, has hitherto chosen to work in the spirit of the traditional German blackletter of whose form he possesses a sure mastery. His Maximilian fraktur (1914) and Magere schrift (1921) also designed

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elucidande veritatis bec substeripta disputabuntur Wittensberge, Presidente R. P.

MARTINO LUTTDER

Artium et S. Theologie Masgistro eius demque ibidem lecstore Ordinario. Quare petit, vt, qui non possunt verbis pressentes nobiscum disceptare, agant id literis absentes. In nomine domini nostri biesu CORISTI, AMEN.



Another of Koch's many activities is to be seen in the Rudolfinischen Drucke, a series of handsome books issued from a private press in Offenbach, directed by himself and Rudolph Gerstung since 1911. The volumes of this press, and the productions of a private book club, the Maximilian Gesellschaft, founded by Dr Hans Loubier provide a consistent and excellent use of the gothic letter, and should be sought for by students of nationalism in typography.

Even with nationalists, amongst whom Dr Klingspor will not object to find himself included, the roman letter, however, appears destined to displace the gothic for all but such highly conservative uses as in bible and prayer book. The newest and most considerable German typographical venture, the Bremer Presse, exclusively employs the roman type. This undertaking was founded by Dr Wilhelm Wiegand in 1914, and has the advantage of Fräulein Anna Simons' co-operation. The type used for the Bremer Presse's series of fine classics is, perhaps, too large for the page, while the smaller size employed for the more ephemeral purposes of the Bremer Verlag is most charming. The Marées Gesellschaft, though it has used gothic for several of its handsome prospectuses, is another important undertaking prominently associated with roman types. Julius Meier-Graefe who was, it will be recalled, one of the original Pan group, holds the view that the only sure corrective to the futilities and extravagances of ultra-modern art lay in the appreciation of the masterpieces of the past.

Meier-Graefe determined to secure this end by the production of perfect facsimiles of reproducible subjects such as watercolours, drawings and pastels. These were to be chosen with a catholic taste and were to range from Dürer and Rembrandt to Gauguin and Renoir. A subsidiary series was to consist of editions of German classics with fitting illustrations. The war postponed the execution of the idea, but in 1916, Meier-Graefe, as an exchanged Russian prisoner of war, was able to initiate the institution which he named after the neoclassicist painter, Hans von Marées of Munich. The first publication was an edition of Goethe's *Clavigo*, with coloured illustrations by Gotz von Senckendorf.

The typography, executed by Drugulin, was arranged by Emil Weiss, Germany's foremost buchkunstler and himself a contributor to early issues of Pan. In the following year appeared the first of the fine portfolios, the Cezanne Mappe, which justly entitled the Marées Gesellschaft to the applause of the discerning public whether German or other.

We shall not be far wrong, perhaps, if we trace to these sources an influence towards moderation in type design, which may accomplish a great deal to purify German *luxus* printing from certain extravagances of which the volumes composed in *Mendelssohn* are not an unfair example. It is interesting to note that, parallel with the work of the Bremer Presse, the more recent German presses desert the tendencies of those of earlier foundation. A very significant example is to be observed in the work of a printer whose career began twenty

ERNST SCHNEIDLER

years ago. Professor F. W. Kleukens has been an active force in German typography since 1907, when he founded the Ernst Ludwig Presse at Darmstadt. In addition, he has taken no small part in the development of letter design by means of his association with the great type foundries of Stempel and Bauer, for which he has made two or three letters, and a large number of typographical decorations. His early letters, Ingeborg (Stempel 1909) and Helga (Stempel 1912), are disagreeable to the eye of any amateur whose taste has been educated by the designs of Jenson, Garamond, Caslon and their derivatives. Like most of the work of German private press directors of his time, the designs of F. W. Kleukens are so enthusiastic as to be lacking in restraint and kindliness. It is no pleasure, at least to the Anglo-Saxon reader, to have occasion to read such volumes as Das Hohe Lied von Salomo (Darmstadt, Ernst Ludwig Presse, 1909) in which was first used the Kleukens antiqua. We much prefer his first book, Das Buch Esther (1908), printed in Genzsch and Heyse's Römischer antiqua. In the first volume of the new Ernst Ludwig Shakespeare, however, we have a book printed in a venetian type which, because it has not sacrificed everything to 'originality' is agreeable to the eye. We look forward to several volumes printed by Professor Kleukens in his new type, and hope that his example will not be lost upon his colleagues. That it is not vain to hope that other German presses will follow the new tendency, may be seen from the work of the Juniperus Presse of Stuttgart, directed by Herr Ernst Schneidler, a professor in the

Christian Kürchtegott Geilert

115 riefe

nebst einer

praktischen Albhanblung

роп дет

guten Sefchmade

in Briefen

*

Euphorion Verlag * Berlin
1921

TYPES IN USE TO-DAY

Würtemberg State School of Arts and Crafts. Herr Schneidler's type is interesting, and though not free from affectation (see the lower case 'q' and 'fi' for example) it is easy to read, and, as in the *Hamlet* (1925) printed by the designer, makes an undeniably handsome page.

The Avalun-Verlag in Hellerau (Dresden) is a general publishing firm which deserves attention. It has to its credit a large number of works, including a number illustrated with etchings and lithographs and composed in widely varied types and styles both roman and gothic. For the Avalun, Mr Jakob Hegner has printed a number of distinguished works in a type face designed by Fleischman. This is, however, not a very tractable letter for modern use, at least to the English eye, though it possesses that note of regimentation and classicism fashionable in German printing at the present day. Since its use in the Insel-Almanach for 1908, type of early French nineteenth century design has been resorted to by the trade publishers of Germany. No doubt collectors had tired of the Janson antiqua which from its use in Pan found itself employed in nine out of ten German fine books brought out between 1895 and 1905. To-day, more than half the good printing in Germany is composed in types such as Didot, Walbaum and Winckelmann which convey an excessively dry atmosphere. It may be admitted, perhaps, that German publishers are not altogether in error in judging that whatever the excellence of Dr Klingspor's modern roman types, they do not always present a literary appearance.



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AT THE
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Morison, Stanley, 1889-1967
A review of recent typography
in England, the United States,
France & Germany

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